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CHAPTER 12

Contesting Muslim Pilgrimage: British-Pakistani Identities, Sacred Journeys to Makkah and Madinah, and the Global Postmodern

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In their groundbreaking volume, *Contesting the Sacred*, John Eade and Michael Sallnow set out a new agenda for the anthropology of pilgrimage, a field hitherto shaped by the theories of Emile Durkheim (1912) and Victor Turner (1974a; 1974b) who stressed the way in which sacred journeys support or subvert the existing social order respectively. While accepting that pilgrimage both promotes social integration and the more temporary, liminal and anti-structural feelings associated with *communitas*, Eade and Sallnow maintain that the reinforcement of social difference during sacred journeys is equally significant in the literature. Structuralist theories are criticised for being overly deterministic, ‘imposing a spurious homogeneity’ on their subject matter (1991: 5), while Eade and Sallnow are also critical of the phenomenologist of religion, Mircea Eliade (1958), whose influential work suggested the ‘inherent capacity’ of holy places ‘to exert a devotional magnetism, *sui generis*’ (1991: 9). Instead, they propose the deconstruction of pilgrimage into ‘an arena of competing discourses’ - the religious and secular, official and popular, consensual and conflictual (1991: 5). Unequally positioned constituencies of pilgrims, religious specialists, local residents and so on are all also shaped in complex ways by subjectivities and locations of class, gender, race, ethnicity and religion. Moreover, pilgrimages can become sites for regional and international political

conflicts, with symbolic centres witnessing division as much as unity (1991: 13). At the same time, 'secular commerce', sustaining often highly developed organisational and commercial infrastructures, is part and parcel of 'pilgrimage' (1991: 24-5). Devotees and custodians alike criticise commodification - perhaps mainly because 'it threatens most conspicuously the fragile boundary between...the sacred and secular realms' (1991: 26).

Against the background of such debates, the present article is a study of the normative and contested accounts of the sacred journeys to Makkah and Madinah undertaken by Pakistani heritage Muslims in the UK diaspora. Over two years, between 1999 and 2001, eighteen in-depth, semi-structured, interviews were conducted with respondents settled in Lancashire mill towns such as Bolton, Bury, Oldham, Rochdale and Nelson. Most interviewees traced their roots to Mirpur district in Pakistan-administered Kashmir (see Saifullah Khan, 1977; Ballard, 1983; Kalra, 2000) while the age of respondents ranged in more or less equal numbers across the following groups: i) teens and twenties; ii) thirties and forties; iii) fifties to seventies. Their occupations included further or higher education student, sales assistant, computer programmer, school teacher, housewife, classroom assistant, chemist, housing support worker, spinner and retiree. Around 25% were women. Most importantly, all had been on Hajj (50%) or *'umra* (the minor pilgrimage) (25%) or both (25%) at least once since the 1970s.

As many as 25,000 British-Muslims travel to Makkah and Madinah for Hajj every year.¹ Indeed, so long as they are physically fit and can afford to make the journey, it is incumbent upon the followers of Islam to undertake the Hajj at least once in their lives from the eighth to the thirteenth day of the final month of the Islamic lunar calendar, *dhul hijja*.² In contrast, *'umra* is a voluntary rite which involves the performance of abbreviated rituals outside Hajj season. During Hajj and *'umra* many Muslims will also seek to do *ziyara* (visitation) of the tombs of sacred personalities such as the Prophet Muhammad, his family and companions. This is certainly true of the majority of South Asian heritage Muslims and especially the British Pakistanis interviewed here. Insofar as they

have been influenced by any particular tradition of Islam, whether through socialisation at home and the mosque or more active religiosity, the respondents tended to be associated with the devotional Islam of transnational Sufi cults and/or the reforming Sunni '*ulama*' (scholars) movement founded in British India, the Ahl-i Sunnat or 'Barelwis' (see Lewis 1994; Sanyal 1996; Werbner, 2003).³

My initial motivation for undertaking this research was very much driven by an interest in globalised imaginings of the *umma* (Islamic community) in Muslim diasporas, this at a time when the study of trans-nationalism was rising to the top of social-scientific agendas. While the impact of contemporary international crises in this regard can not be ignored (see Werbner, 2002, on '9/11' and the Gulf War, and McLoughlin, 1996, on Bosnia), the pilgrimage to Makkah and Madinah is perhaps the most emblematic expression of Muslim community, for both Muslims and non-Muslims alike. As one of the five pillars (*arkan*) of Islam, it is the Hajj that brings believers together at the site of their faith's genesis. The rites of this sacred journey are said not only to purify the individual believer of his or her sins, but also attest to, and reaffirm, the diachronic and synchronic continuity of the *umma*. So while pilgrims follow in the footsteps of the Prophet Muhammad - who is believed to have established the rituals prescribed by the Qur'an (2:124ff) before his death—with more than 2.5 million pilgrims annually, the Hajj is now 'the largest and most culturally diverse assembly of humanity to gather in one place at one time' (Bianchi, 1995: 88).

In a pivotal study, one contemporary with Eade and Sallnow, Eickelman and Piscatori are concerned with the ways in which various forms of travel and associated 'journeys of the mind' (1990: xii) have contributed to the Islamicate religious imagination past and present, as well as the extent to which mobility 'inspire[s] changes in how Muslims conceive of and experience "Islam"' (1990: 3) spiritually, politically and so on. Eickelman and Piscatori see religious 'communities' not as determined by doctrine but rather as imagined through shared symbols and metaphors with plural meanings coexisting and competing in changing contexts.

Amongst Muslims of variable historical memories, social statuses and class, gender and ethnic positions, these contexts are transformed through time and across inter-linking spatial scales (1990: 15). Moreover, Muslim travellers have to negotiate their similarities and differences in encounters with Islamic 'others' at least as much as non-Islamic 'others'. Indeed, Islam is one factor amongst many and 'a causal relationship between the act of travel and a heightened sense of being Muslim' cannot necessarily be assumed (1990: 16). Hajj is increasingly nationalised with national delegations often limiting cosmopolitan interactions (1990: xvi) and travellers exhibiting a 'consciousness of locality and difference' (1990: xv). There can be no easy dichotomy either between sacred centres and peripheries - proximity to the former is not always invested with greater legitimacy (1990: 13). At different points in Islamic history and individual Muslim lifetimes, travel to Sufi shrines or the homelands of migrant workers have been as compelling as the Hajj (1990: xiv).

In the pre-modern period, the time, effort and even danger involved in travelling to Makkah and Madinah generally meant that numbers attending for pilgrimage were relatively small (Pearson, 1994). By contrast, in an age of globalisation, with the advent of international air travel, it has become accessible and affordable to ordinary believers worldwide.⁴ More generally, Turner argues that 'In the pre-modern period, world religious systems had little opportunity to realize themselves globally, because the systems of communications and transport were wholly underdeveloped or non-existent' (1994: 83). It was only in modernity that the orthodox discursive tradition (Asad, 1986), or what Gellner (1992) calls 'High' Islam, has become more decisively and uniformly universalised at the expense of 'Folk' Islam. A tendency towards ideological coherence has been effected through state education and mass literacy, as well as the media, Islamic *da'wa* (propagation) organisations and international migration. In her study of Sylhet in Bangladesh, for example, Gardner (1995) argues that, amongst successful economic migrants and their families, the performance of Hajj is part of a modern, more rationalised and textualised,

'Protestant' Islamic consciousness that is the product of working in Britain and especially Saudi Arabia (1995: 243-5).

The argument here, however, is that it would be wrong to argue that globalisation simply moulds all tradition into a standardised and homogenised fundamentalism. As Lehman (2001) and Beckford (2003) suggest, and my ethnography of British-Pakistanis shows, time-space compression sees religious actors make and remake boundaries, creating multiple, criss-crossing webs of friction and conflict, ambiguity and resistance, within and across competing imagined communities and traditions. Indeed, for all the movement of so-called fundamentalism from the margins of classical Islam towards the centre of modern Muslim discourse (Calder, 1993), Islam remains 'polycentric...lacking any central global power' (Lehman, 2001: 308). As Fischer and Abedi (1990) maintain, even while the pilgrimage is performed within the boundaries of the authoritarian nation-state of Saudi Arabia, contested social, economic, cultural and political inferences from various local-global contexts are always in evidence. Moreover, paradoxically, the very processes which enable Islamist claims to regulate universalised Muslim identities, also integrate the Muslim masses (and especially the new middle classes) into new public spheres driven by electronic capitalism and cultures of everyday consumerism, organic hybridisation and reflexive self-identities (Turner, 1994: 202; Appadurai, 1996; Featherstone, 2002).

Turning then to my ethnography, firstly there is an account of the changing dynamics of British-Pakistanis' experiences of deciding to embark upon pilgrimage. In contrast to the expectations and religious imaginaries of their ancestors prior to Partition, their accounts are reflective of socio-economic and cultural shifts towards a religiosity increasingly defined in terms of self-identity and consumption as well as normative traditions. The ethnography continues with an examination of respondents' constructions of sacred time and place, community and identity, during the various rituals. However, profane inferences were never far away, with brotherhood and *communitas* cross-cut by competing narratives of socio-economic and political, as well as religious and racialised,

differences and divisions. Finally, I assess pilgrims' accounts of reintegrating into profane time and space back in the UK. The focus here is on the pervasive power of memories and souvenirs of the sacred alongside changing British-Pakistani expectations of a *hajji(a)* and divergent trajectories of Muslim religious identity and consciousness in late modern Britain.

TRANSFORMING PILGRIMAGE: TRADITION AND MIGRATION, IDENTITY AND CONSUMER CULTURE

Until the post-Partition period, when remittances from migrant workers in Britain and the Middle East began to impact, few in what was to become Pakistani-administered Kashmir would have visited Makkah and Madinah.⁵ Unless they were sailors in the British Merchant Navy or soldiers in the British Indian Army (Ballard, 1983), the majority that did would probably have started out on foot, joining a train to Rawalpindi from nearby Jhelum and from there continuing on to the port of Karachi. However, one female respondent, Munira (aged 69, widow), related how, as a young girl in her village, she would listen to the women of a local *sayyid* (descendent of the Prophet) and *pir's* (mystical guide) family talk about his overland journey to 'Makkah-Madinah' during the 1930s.⁶ Stopping on the way for *ziyara* at places such as the Baghdad shrine of the eponymous 'founder' of the Qadiriyya order, 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (d. 1166), this *hajji* had taken years to complete his journey. Such pious stories were part of a (predominantly oral) discursive tradition (Asad, 1986) within which the Holy Places found a pivotal place in the religious imagination of generations of mostly illiterate Mirpuri-Muslims. Similarly, while the *khutba* (sermon) of '*id-i qurbani* (the festival of the sacrifice marking the end of Hajj) popularised the Qur'anic story of Ibrahim, Hajar and Isma'il that is re-enacted during the rituals, mystical poetry and devotional music (*qawwali*) both spoke of longing to give *salams* (greetings) at the *jalli sharif* (noble grill) of the Prophet's tomb (Mukhtar, 42, community leader).

The pervasive Sufi tradition of Punjab and Kashmir also imagined the principal importance of pilgrimage to 'Makkah-

Madinah' in terms of an interior journey. No doubt this was of some comfort for people who had little prospect of travelling to the Holy Places. Another native of Mirpur, Zafar (74, retired spinner), recounted a Sufi tale with the moral that one 'can meet God and His Prophet everyday...you do not physically need to go to the Holy Places'.⁷ Recalling the words of Punjabi Sufi poet, Baba Bulleh Shah (d.1758), he argued: 'Going to Makkah is not the purpose; the purpose is to make peace with your Lord'.⁸ To reinforce this idea that the sacred can be found anywhere, he also related a story about Mian Muhammad Bakhsh (d.1907), one of the most important modern Sufi saints of the region.⁹ Despite being from a religious family, having wandered as a *faqir* (mystic) and become a well-known poet, Mian Muhammad never went for Hajj. Zafar told of how, even when his followers arranged and paid for his travel to the Holy Places, the saint turned back at the train unable to rid himself of the feeling that it was '*be adabi*' (disrespectful) to 'set his sinful foot upon the same earth as our beloved Prophet'.

Like the remoteness of the imaginary homeland for many ancient diasporas, the narration of 'Makkah-Madinah' as a faraway place in rural pre-Partition North India only intensified the mythic power of its sacrality. Perhaps inevitably, then, amongst the oldest of British-Pakistanis, there is a tendency to idealise the epic difficulty and exceptionality of pilgrimages of the past. They ascribe to them more intrinsic value than (what they see as) the all too abbreviated and (seemingly) instantly gratifying mass excursions of today. Of course, some do still seek to make epic journeys overland,¹⁰ but given their new prosperity and the availability of affordable and convenient international air travel, most British-Pakistanis and their transnational families now have a reasonable expectation of going to the Holy Places at some point in their lives.

Having initially funded the pilgrimages of parents and grandparents back home in Pakistan, the first generation of migrants began to go on Hajj in large numbers themselves once families were reunited in Britain, a process that was completed only

in the 1980s. This was a time, too, of widespread redundancy in the textiles industry and approaching middle age for the men in question, as well as a world-wide Islamic revival from the revolution in Iran to General Zia's Islamisation policy in Pakistan. While the shift in conditions of possibility has been remarkable for all concerned, it has been particularly so for women, as well as children and young people, and even the infirm. All now regularly make the journey with globalisation having wrought something of a democratisation of pilgrimage amongst more privileged groups such as economic migrants at least.¹¹ One young male respondent, for example, Karim, 24, a sales representative, described taking his ageing mother direct from Manchester to Madinah on a charter flight of only six hours duration.¹²

Even in the jet age, however, it would be wrong to overlook British-Pakistanis' often spiritually uplifting and physically and emotionally testing experiences of pilgrimage. Many still stress that going to Makkah and Madinah is very much a matter of *kismet*, fate or destiny: 'in the hands of God' or 'answering the call' if it comes (Shauqat, 36, small business advisor). Moreover, at the same time as presenting new opportunities, their relative affluence and diasporic self-consciousness has raised new questions and dilemmas for British-Pakistanis concerning religious duties that would have been largely irrelevant to their ancestors. Depending on an individual's age, gender and other responsibilities, as well as their self-identity and level of religiosity, but also their competing social and economic priorities and those of their families, as well as the cultural expectations of British-Pakistani communities per se, their responses to such questions and dilemmas have varied considerably. Discussions and debates about who should go for pilgrimage, when, and for what purpose, are rarely straightforward in a 'normative' religious sense.

Zafar (74, retired spinner) told of how, as a labour migrant in the 1960s and 1970s, he had certainly had the money to go for Hajj but could not justify financing the trip until he had reunited his family in Britain. His time and funds had been invested in visits to Mirpur where he had bought land and animals as well as

building a *kothi* (large brick house). Further illustrating this customary expectation that pilgrimage is properly something for later in life, Habib (45, spinner) reported the fury of his family when, as a spiritually-minded youth in his twenties, he had announced his intention to go for Hajj in 1980. One night, Habib had dreamt of the Prophet and upon informing his *shaykh* (Sufi guide) of this the latter insisted that this was his call to the Holy Places. Surely, concluded the *shaykh*, his coming to England had been fated so that he might accumulate sufficient funds for the journey.¹³ However, Habib's family rated 'other responsibilities and needs' - including getting married, buying a house and starting a family - as much higher priorities for someone in their mid-twenties and advised the young man to wait until he was more mature.

For younger British-Pakistanis now, however, the pressure on the spiritually-minded to postpone pilgrimage until later in life is less pronounced than it once was. For some, pilgrimage is very much seen as having an important part to play in a reflective personal journey of religious revival (compare Metcalf, 1990):

I'd just started reading [the five daily prayers] regularly and I thought, "Well, I've got the money, whatever I've got I may as well use it". You never know. I might not be here next year. I was involved in worldly affairs, just being up to no good, and for me it was a form of purification. ('Ali, 30, housing support worker)

Another male respondent in his thirties put his situation in very stark soteriological terms, describing a fear inspired in him by hearing of a *hadith* (narrated tradition) of the Prophet: anyone who can 'afford to do Hajj and doesn't - then he dies as a Christian or a Jew' (Sajid, 37, computer programmer).

For Shazia (56, housewife), in contrast, who had waited until her daughters were married before undertaking Hajj (although her husband had not waited), it was a question of deciding to go quickly - she sold some of her jewellery - in the hope of coping with an individual crisis. In the diaspora and at similar distance from the local shrine of her youth where women had always gone

in times of trouble, she went instead to Makkah and Madinah.¹⁴ Moreover, reflecting on the expectation that pilgrimage should be undertaken only by those willing to assume the responsibilities of a pious life thereafter, Shazia evidenced a highly personalised and pragmatic interpretation of Islam which willingly contested the still very real expectations of many religious leaders and elders:

Then people said to her [Shazia's sister-in-law, whom Shazia had invited to accompany her], "Look, you put make-up on, you dress like this, you do this, you do that, and if you go to Hajj you'll have to give up all this and live a pious life". I explained to her that this is a personal matter and that you take it at your own pace and doing Hajj doesn't mean that you become 100% practising over night.

Moreover, when an *'alim* (religious scholar) from an important *dar-al-'ulum* (Islamic seminary) in nearby Ramsbottom ruled, 'No, she [the sister-in-law] can't go on her own [without a *mahram*, a male relative whom it is forbidden to marry]', she argued from experience, 'it can be done, there are ways round it'. Indeed, a respondent with experience of leading groups on pilgrimage, Mukhtar (42, community leader), suggested that, despite the efforts of the Saudi Arabian government to regulate it, in the large groups that do travel from Britain, many women are not accompanied by *mahrams* in the technical sense.

An emerging dimension of the experience of contemporary pilgrimage for British-Pakistanis, then, is its availability as a reasonably affordable commodity that can be increasingly consumed at times of one's need, desire and choosing as part of the elaboration of self-identity. The new immediacy of international travel also means that it is possible for individuals to travel for Hajj and especially *'umra* at just a few week's notice although most family groups plan months ahead. One young male, Abid (30, sales representative), spoke of fasting during Ramazan in 1998 and listening to the exhortatory speeches of the *'ulama'* (religious scholars) in the mosque. With the freedom to travel as and when he wanted, he and a friend just thought: "What would it be like

to be fasting in the Holy Cities?” We both spoke about it so much that we said, “Why don’t we just go?””.

At the same time, securing a month’s leave from work can be difficult for many British-Pakistanis intending to go for Hajj and some have to carry annual leave over from one year to another to enable their pilgrimage. However, quotas for the numbers of pilgrims travelling from the UK for Hajj are much less pressured than those in Muslim countries.¹⁵ Moreover, while Saudi Arabia has its own detailed requirements of visitors,¹⁶ as a non-Muslim state, the UK does not seek to regulate pilgrimage in the way that ministries in the Islamic world do.¹⁷ British-Pakistani pilgrims travel in groups from tens to hundreds of people having purchased packages organised through officially recognised Saudi providers in consort with UK-based travel agents. ‘Budget’ and ‘five-star’ options are available, with the cost for international travel, accommodation and local services, currently ranging from just under £2000 per person to about £3000.¹⁸ Large companies and small agents alike advertise on the web, in the minority ethnic media and through posters in religious institutions. Indeed, what might be described as a global marketisation of Islam in new public spheres and consumer cultures (compare Featherstone, 2002: 8), something that can be measured in terms of the proliferation of new media, is very much in evidence in the pilgrimage industry. One respondent, Suleyman (16, student), for example, even won his *‘umra* tour in a regular prize draw at his local *zikh* (ritual remembrance of God) group.

In the same way that experiences of pilgrimage today are shaped by the sheer velocity of globalisation and the choices of consumer capitalism, in the Information Age some pilgrims arrive in Makkah and Madinah better orientated to the rituals and setting than any previous generation.¹⁹ Live satellite television broadcasts from the Holy Places, official Saudi Arabian government videos, documentaries made for UK television by Muslim production teams, Internet sites, travelogues and guide-books all at once demythologise and re-mythologise the Hajj especially. Abid and his friend, having decided to travel at short notice, decided simply to

'buy the book and learn the *du'as* (supplications)'. Indeed, Mukhtar (42, community leader) reports that the historic institution of the *mutawif* (guide), although still in evidence in Makkah, is 'pretty much dead...people know what to do...it is all DIY [Do It Yourself] and less specialised'. At the same time, some earnest young pilgrims do find the sheer volume of material available confusing: 'Everyone was very happy for me that I was going but how was I supposed to feel?...Will the pilgrimage be accepted if I don't know the rites' (Suleyman, 16, student). Munira (69, widow) concurred highlighting the appeal of religious literalism in an age of the overproduction of knowledge and the dispersal of authority: 'young people have access to so much...My youngest son has become a Wahhabi whereas all the elders follow the way of *pirs*'.²⁰

THE SACRED AND PROFANE: NORMATIVE AND IMPROVISED AUTHENTICITIES OF 'BEING THERE'

The ritual mechanisms of pilgrims' symbolic separation from *dunya* (this worldliness) and liminal transition to the sacred are performed when, having made their ablutions and stated their intention to compete the pilgrimage, they don the *ihram*.²¹ Depending on their route to Saudi Arabia, whether they come via a port of entry at Jeddah or Madinah, British-Pakistanis may change into their ritual attire in the UK, where they make stopovers (for example, in Egypt, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates), on the aeroplane itself or at one of the *miqats* (boundary stations) outside Makkah.²² Two female respondents spoke of *ihram* in terms of both physical separation from the familiar and a greater consciousness of Allah, what Fischer and Abedi describe evocatively as 'reawakening from the oblivion of ordinary life' (1990: 150):

you forget everything, your children, your families. I thought England was everything for me, my lifestyle was everything, but once I got there all I thought about was me as a Muslim, what I've done in my past, the mistakes I've done. I just wanted all my sins to be forgiven and that was the focus of me being there. These two weeks I have to be a perfect Muslim and being there, it's such a beautiful place, that you

don't think of doing anything wrong and it's like Islam is in your face and I think that's the best place to be, to be a perfect Muslim. (Maryam, 26, teaching assistant)

You're trying to focus, be more vigilant, you're going on Hajj...this feeling of wanting to be *pak*, to be clean, and that doesn't just mean physical cleanliness but spiritually pure thoughts. It prepares you as you're approaching the House of God that you're becoming more God-conscious, reciting the *talbiya* [invocation]: "O God, I am here, what is your command?" at every part of the journey. We cut off from *dunya* and go in the divine presence. (Shazia, 56, housewife)

Highlighting the sacred journey of pilgrims from sin and death to purity and rebirth as they repent and ask for God's forgiveness and mercy (Werbner, 1998: 97), Habib (45, spinner) explained that the *ihram* also anticipates how all humankind will appear before God on the Day of Judgement:

I think what Zindapir [a Pakistani Sufi saint] said about the concept of *ihram* is pretty much how I felt.²³ He said it was a rehearsal for the Hereafter. When you're in the divine presence that's how you will be. A Muslim dies with only two sheets of cloth [their shroud]. Likewise, performing Hajj. No matter if he is a king or beggar, there is no difference between them in the sight of God.

However, another pilgrim cautioned that spiritual introversion and self-consciousness is not at all an automatic outcome of ritual separation: 'you need to be in touch with yourself or you can feel anything' (Ali, 30, housing support worker). Certainly for Zafar (74, retired spinner) the prospect of coming so close to the House of Allah, the centre of the Islamic universe, made him feel excited but also humble and nervous because of his sins and, recalling Mian Muhammad's anxieties, a perceived need to keep to the elevated (and idealised) *adab* (good manners) he associated with the Holy Places. However, this was not true of everyone. He complained: 'In the past every moment of the journey was sacred and cherished but I see people with their mobile phones even when

they are putting on their *ihram* - their mind is still on *dunya*, their business and football'.

Many pilgrims' incorporation into sacred time and space is confirmed when they are confronted with Masjid al-Haram, the Great Mosque of Makkah. Here they perform the first set of rituals which re-enact in reverse order the faith testing ordeals of the founder of monotheism, Prophet Ibrahim, his son, Isma'il, and the latter's mother and former's concubine, Hajar (Fischer and Abedi, 1990: 150f; Werbner, 1998: 97-100). When Abraham is forced by his wife Sarah to abandon Isma'il and Hajar in the desert, the latter searches frantically for water to save her baby son from death, only for God to create a miraculous spring from the ground. Pilgrims commemorate these events by drinking water from the well of *zamzam*, this after the *sa'y* (hurrying seven times) between two small hillocks, al-Safa and al-Marwa, adjacent to the precincts of the Great Mosque. Of course, it is the *ka'ba*, the large cube-shaped stone structure, covered by a black silk *kiswa* or curtain and embroidered with golden calligraphy, that recalls the most iconic and totemic images of the pilgrimage. This is the House of God, first built by Adam and then rebuilt later in life by Abraham and Isma'il to mark their covenant with God when He tested a father by asking him to sacrifice his son.²⁴ Here pilgrims must complete the *tawaf* (seven circumambulations).²⁵

In underlining the importance of 'being there' pilgrims reinforced the idea of the Holy Places as a spiritual homeland and 'one of the primal scenes of Islam' (Fischer and Abedi, 1990: 150). As Tariq reflected (53, retired factory shop steward): 'I had seen the large photographs in people's houses, but nothing prepares you for the 'splendour' and immense size of the mosque'. In a similar vein, Amjad (55, chemist) discussed the contrast between *assuming* that one is facing the *ka'ba* when praying towards Makkah and then actually 'looking at it'.²⁶ He, like many pilgrims, was overwhelmed with awe and emotion:

When I just walked into the Great Mosque, *al-hamdu-li-llah* [praise be to God] and I saw the *ka'ba* there, the only thing I could do was to cry. You just grab the wall and cry for forgiveness, all the sins and

misdemeanours you've done. The human beings, they come and say, "Allah, forgive me for that" and after you feel as though you're really born again...It is as though you have come back home. That the *ka'ba* is the very source of our beginning - this is the feeling I had. And checking with '*ulama*', some say the reason why it is there is because in the beginning of the world, the *ka'ba* is the place where Azra'il (as) took the piece of earth that Allah used to make Adam. I returned and the whole of humanity needs to return. It was a great blessing.

Such narratives of sacred place and belonging are also inflected with more individualised and particularistic feelings of closeness to family and kin, especially the dead. Maryam (26, teaching assistant) reported the impact on her mother who was recently bereaved after the death of a son:

I remember my mother saying to me, "My son's gone to a place like this and we're all going to go here". As soon as she got there she was just consoled completely...My mum has been religious all her life and she knows we're all going to die, but having your son taken away from you, only a mother can understand that. Each time something would remind her of him and she wouldn't stop crying. Being in England, I think it's probably the worst place for her, because there was nothing to remind her of God apart from her home and *namaz* [daily obligatory prayers].

As they circumambulate the House of God most pilgrims salute the *hajar al-aswad* (black stone) lodged in one corner of the *ka'ba* and said by Muslim tradition to be a meteorite brought from Paradise by the Prophet Adam. However, others struggle through the crowds to kiss it (Bianchi, 1995: 89). Ikram (25, teacher), another young man who went on Hajj primarily to accompany his elderly mother, told of how unable to secure a clear path to the *ka'ba*, he improvised: 'I just thought in my heart I've got the black stone in my hand and this is everything to me, my *ka'ba*, it just came to me, I thought I should kiss her hand and that was good enough for me'.

For all such novel and deeply personalised interpretations, Sajid (37, computer programmer) described another characteristic

experience for many British-Pakistanis. He underlined the continuing textual domination of an Islamic discursive tradition (Asad, 1986; Messick 1993), one that has socialised generations of Muslims, directly or indirectly: 'the whole history of Islam actually goes round in your head, what you've read...it's like walking in the footsteps of the Prophet and the Companions'. However, in this regard, the influence of popular culture on the religious imagination is also apparent: 'I have a video called *The Message* and in it, it shows what the *ka'ba* would probably have looked like. This was how I pictured it when I closed my eyes' (Tariq, 53, retired factory shop steward).²⁷ Such popular texts are invoked to simulate authenticity in part because contemporary Makkah has cheated them of the unadulterated tradition of their imaginations. Many appreciate the air-conditioning at the Great Mosque: '*Asian Englandi* are *nazak* (soft/spoilt) so Allah has made the Hajj much easier for our sake' (Munira, 69, widow). However, Suleyman (16, student) was not impressed with some of the many modern 'improvements' made by the Saudi Arabian government since the 1960s especially: 'I could not but help feel that I was not experiencing the true *sa'y* which generations in the past have done running on marble rather than rock'.²⁸

Moreover, in a context where Makkah receives more visitors than any other city in the world for one month in the year, and in so doing provides Saudi Arabia with an income second only in importance to oil (Park, 1994: 263), 'Ali (30, housing support worker) underlined the constant presence of a globalised, Western-influenced, *dunya*, cheek by jowl, with the sacred:

You've got a big Arndale²⁹ centre sitting in front of Haram Sharif and in front of Masjid al-Nabi [the Prophet's mosque in Madinah] you see shops that have Nike trainers and even white wedding dresses. It makes you think, "Who buys these? How much are they [the Saudis] influenced [by the West]?" Everybody around you, they're wearing white *cholays* [robes] and they've got turbans on and you don't see people in trousers but yet these are shops that are selling Western clothing.³⁰

Some welcome the supermarkets with branded goods or enjoy looking for bargains while others are disappointed by the Saudi and UK agents who promise the world and deliver the bare minimum. However, as a wise young pilgrim, Hamid (20, undergraduate) advised, 'If you want to look for tradition you will find tradition. If you don't look you will not find tradition. So it's a matter of where you look rather than being traditional or not'.

The zenith of the Hajj is the procession several miles east - via an overnight camp in the Mina Valley - to the plain of 'Arafat where Adam is said to have met again with Eve after the Fall (Wolfe, 1997: xxiii). Here they repented of their sin and were taught to pray on the Mount of Mercy where later Muhammad, in his time, gave his farewell sermon. Some pilgrims shade from heat of the day in tents while others participate more directly in the solemn congregational standing (the *wuquf*) in supplication from noon until sunset:

Us ladies just stayed in the tents, we made *du'a* and prayed for everything we could think of. I was especially praying for my son, so that he becomes good and doesn't get into trouble, all these kinds of things...making *du'a*, asking forgiveness and doing *tasbeeh* [using prayer beads] and *zikr*. (Shazia, 56, housewife)

Many hold that it is at this time and place that God is closest to the world, 'making it easier for human prayers to attract his attention' (Bianchi, 1995: 89) and pilgrims try to spend at least a short period on the Mount of Mercy making *du'a*. However, it was the sheer size, scale and openness of 'a vast plain of people all dressed in the same clothes as far as you can see on the horizon' (Majid, 23, petrol station manager) that made most impact on pilgrims. At 'Arafat they described an oceanic feeling of oneness and collective effervescence which again evoked the end as well as the beginning of time:

Arafat is exactly the same as what it will be like in Yaum al-Qiyama [Day of Resurrection] and to get the gravity of the situation you have to be there...It drives the message into you how dependent we are. You

see the whole of humanity all around you and say “*al-hamdu-li-llah*, I am actually part and parcel of this sea that is before me, the sea of humanity”, the oneness that it represents, our one Lord, Allah. I was amazed to hear the ‘*ulama*’ saying that it was this place of ‘Arafat where Adam was forgiven for taking the forbidden fruit...It was a great joy, the amount of *rahmah* [mercy] that is there...The system is just goes into a state of shock really, just looking at the size of the situation. (Amjad, 55, chemist)

If pilgrimage involves separation from *dunya* and the seeking of forgiveness, it also involves sacrifice ‘without losing faith in God’ (Werbner, 1998: 98). Having left the hotels and shops of Makkah behind and moved out into the desert, the stoning of three tall pillars (*jamra*) back at Mina and then the sacrifice that follows commemorate the binding of Isma‘il and the repudiation of the Devil’s temptations. Amjad (55, chemist), one of the theologically more literate pilgrims, once again explained his understanding of the symbolic significance of the rituals:

The Day of Judgement is real. It drives into you the seriousness and the reality of the faith, especially when you’re stoning the Devils. You’re getting people here [in Britain, Europe and the West] nowadays that say that the Devil is just a figment of the imagination but, with respect...a Muslim has to always be prepared for what a powerful adversary the Devil is. He’s as real as anything and always tries to make sure you are never saved.

Trying to follow the example of exemplary persons such as Abraham and Isma‘il who resisted the temptations of Satan and showed commitment and perseverance or *sabr* in their faith (Fischer and Abedi, 1990: 165), some pilgrims emphasised that: ‘You have to be patient here, then in the rest of your life you’re patient, it’s good for you’ (Farzana, 20, student). While there was only implicit criticism here, others were more explicit in their criticisms of fellow pilgrims arguing that, given the vast expansion of numbers in the modern age, many had lost respect and required instruction on proper *adab*. This was all grist to the mill of older pilgrims’ like Zafar (74, retired spinner): ‘Unless you suffer, hunger, thirst and

feel discomfort, you have really not done Hajj...Have they been on Hajj or some holiday?’.

Nevertheless, some do find that the reality of completing this part of the Hajj really does test them to their limits despite the modern conveniences. While many are extremely well prepared and organised, the heat combined with the sheer numbers can take its toll on others in terms of getting lost, dehydration, sunburn, exhaustion, injury and even the threat of death. It also impacts on the ability (and desire) of some pilgrims—and not just the elderly or infirm who are excused—to complete their rites in the prescribed manner, again with some unusual improvisations. Most problems arise at the stoning of the pillars after the tiredness of a night meditating and collecting the requisite pebbles at Muzdalifa. The crush of people at the *jamra* makes the act extremely hazardous with some experiencing the stampedes that regularly make international news:³¹

A stampede broke loose with people just crushed with each other, women without their scarves, screaming. A helicopter was monitoring on top of us and doing nothing. There wasn't even room for an ambulance to get through. I think on that day 50 to 60 people died...To me there's a simple solution but I think it's the way we've been brought up that we shouldn't criticise anything...its not criticising the Hajj ritual its constructive criticism to improve things. One '*ulama*' was standing there and he said, "No, you shouldn't say things like that". (Sajid, 37, computer programmer)

[Back at the hotel] there was a room full of people from Bolton and Manchester with all these lame excuses, all these guys bunking off. One guy was saying that him and the five guys that have come here, they're ill, they've left their pebbles with another guy. He just happened to turn up as well, 24 hours before he was due back in Makkah. He said, "Oh, I've had enough, I put all six people's pebbles in one cloth and threw the big 'football' at the Devil". They were shouting at him, "Stupid, you're supposed to throw them one by one". He said, "Oh, please don't say nothing to me, I've just about made it back myself". (Majid, 23, petrol station manager)

The pilgrim relating this last story, whilst completing his 'return' *tawaf* (Wolfe, 1997: xxiii) having arrived back in Makkah from Mina, actually collapsed and had to be taken to the hospital inside the Great Mosque's precincts:

That day was the longest and most painful of all the Hajj, the day when you really get purified...I had tears in my eyes and I was reading *kalima* [the Muslim profession of faith] and thinking, "I'm going any minute now but at least I've done Hajj". I realised that if someone had told me the pilgrimage was going to be so difficult I probably wouldn't have come but *al-hamdu-li-llah* I didn't know that.

MULTIPLE LOCATIONS, COMPETING IMAGINARIES: RACE & CLASS, PURITANISM & DEVOTIONALISM

The sacrifice of *'id al-'adha*, sometimes known as *'id al-kabir* (the 'big' festival), is the normative culmination of the Hajj. According to Werbner, the commemoration of Abraham's covenant with God is 'a moment of ordeal and release' (1998: 99). Celebrated by Muslims world-wide, there is also a symbolic reminder to pilgrims to share their blessings as the sacrificial meat is given to the poor. However, given the modern, depersonalised mechanisation and bureaucratisation of the Hajj, British-Pakistanis now buy vouchers for the animal sacrifice before leaving the UK.³² Neither do they participate in the *'id* celebrations because of the demanding schedule of rituals. Nevertheless, reflecting back on the rites of pilgrimage, there are many accounts of the sacred unity and emotional bonding of Muslims as a community, with reference to the suspension of racial, class and national hierarchies described by Turner (1969). There is a strong sense of egalitarianism, anti-structure and *communitas*, that 'humanity is one single community...not different and separate nations' (Amjad, 55, chemist):

People who I'd never seen before and will probably never see again were coming up and saying "*mubarak* [blessings, congratulations], you've just done *'umra*". Even all the barbers [who cut or shave pilgrims' hair as a sign of release from *ihram*] shook my hand. It really was a

humbling experience. I really felt Islamic brotherhood and I'm just used to being with Pakistanis. (Abid, 30, sales assistant)

In Makkah *sharif* you're sitting around the *ka'ba*, you see lots of people from all walks of life, old, young, little boys, little girls from all corners of the world, which amazed me. I remember talking about multiculturalism and pluralism, even writing essays about such things in Britain, and trying to understand other people. At that time all these things came to mind. Everyone tries to communicate with one another, even smiles or letting one person pass before you, letting them go in front or apologising, even sharing dates that you've got, or fruit, with the next person. I couldn't speak their language, they couldn't speak mine, but the smiles on each other's faces made you feel really, really happy. (Ikram, 25, teacher)

The integrative function of ritual does not of course impose simple uniformity of meaning upon pilgrims. Rather, as we have seen, the pilgrimage is perhaps better seen as providing a common symbolic form which enables the aggregation of a sacred community, while at the same time allowing for the expression of multi-vocal interpretations and individual experiences (Turner, 1974a and 1974b; Cohen, 1985). Moreover, while it is still possible to be treated as *dauyuf al-rahman* (Guests of the Merciful), perhaps especially in Madinah which is described as more relaxed than Makkah, British-Pakistanis complained about the harshness of those marshalling pilgrims at the key sites and the fact that, although most shops are run by Pakistani immigrants, the latter can not own property in their own right in Saudi Arabia (Hamid, 20, undergraduate). They did not escape racism as easily as Malcolm X (1968) during his somewhat privileged Hajj.

Nevertheless, whilst in the Holy Places many British-Pakistanis were also confronted with experiences that prompted a deep realisation, too, of the economic privileges and political freedoms that they benefit from by living in the West. Some members of the *umma* are undoubtedly more exposed than others to the stark inequalities and injustices that remain within a globalising world. As a diasporic community, British-Pakistanis were caught between

a sense of connection and disconnection with pilgrims from South Asia especially:

I think we're lucky being in Europe; *al-hamdu-li-llah*, we have work that financially pays us quite well and people get money from the welfare. For people from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and the poor countries - the sacrifices they would have to make—it's much harder. I think their Hajj is more complete. It's far too easy for us. Although we're going to Hajj, we still pick and choose. We'll travel on the coaches and things like that but those people, they'll sleep rough, they'll eat little and they'll walk from one place to another. Yeah, so I value those people's Hajj more than ours and I think it is more valuable to Allah. (Ali, 30, housing support worker)

At the same time, British-Pakistanis also revealed stereotypes and prejudices of their own in terms of race, culture and class: 'pilgrims from Africa [were]...seen as the cause of stampedes' (Zafar, 74, retired spinner) and Shi'as were criticised because they 'dress all in black, are always chanting something, behaving in odd ways and determined not to fit in' (Ikram, 25, teacher). Given her own affluence, Shazia (56, housewife) felt threatened by rumours about the alleged criminality of the poor:

I had a lot of jewellery on and the women started telling me these horror stories saying, "If you go down there on your own, there are these black women who'll cut your hand off and slit your throat or they'll cut your stomach open and they'll take away your gold", some saying, "they'll drug you and take away your bangles". I was really, really frightened. I tried my best to take my bangles off but my hands had swollen, so I ended up by using some tape to cover them and wore a *jilbab*, like a black cloak, to make sure that they were never displayed.

As Suleyman (16, student) suggested, 'Some people give a bad name to their culture and because of this the rest of their people are looked down upon even on pilgrimage'.

Having completed the Meccan rites many pilgrims travel north to Madinah to pay their respects to Muhammad whose tomb is to

be found at the Prophet's Mosque with its green dome, tall minarets and ornate calligraphic carvings. South Asian heritage Muslims are amongst the most devoted to the Prophet, with those influenced by Sufi and Barelwi movements emphasising the concept of the 'light of Muhammad' (*nur-i Muhammadi*). This is said to have existed from creation and is derived from God's own light (*nur-i khuda*). According to Barelwi scholars, Muhammad is no mere mortal. Alive not dead, he possesses '*ilm al-ghayb*' (knowledge of the unknown) and is the primary focus for Muslims' *tawassul* (intercession) with God (Sanyal, 1996: 255-9):

Our belief is that our *nabi* [prophet], like all the *anbiya'* [prophets] is living and if we are sincere our *nabi* is going to sort all our problems. Our '*ulama'* say there is a saying of our *nabi* that whoever comes and visits me in my mosque, *insha'Allah* [God willing], come the Day of Judgement, I will not let that person down. (Amjad, 55, chemist)

Other pilgrims described queuing in single file and then having a few seconds to give their *salams* (greetings) to the Prophet's tomb and make *du'as* with some believing that 'the carpets are meant to be part of *janna* ['the Garden', Paradise]' (Farzana, 20, student). For some British-Pakistanis time in Madinah was seen as the most profound and emotional of all their pilgrimage experiences, despite not being a part of the formal rituals:

I felt a strong emotion thinking that just the other side of that gate, which was only a matter of a few feet away, lay the most beautiful person who has ever lived and I started to cry. It was totally involuntary and I cried until I left the mosque. (Tariq, 53, retired factory shop steward)

Even a young respondent who was sceptical about 'spiritual powers' still 'felt very strongly "There is something here"' (Maryam, 26, teaching assistant).

The British-Pakistanis interviewed found that their visit to Madinah underlined their theological differences with other Muslims, differences already familiar from Pakistan and the UK.

They described meeting ‘different types of people who practice Islam according to their area of *fiqh* [jurisprudence, schools of law]’, sometimes encountering annoying zealots who sought to ‘correct’ their practice on various matters: ‘You get young people coming up to you and telling you, “Uncle, you should know better. It is *bid’a* [innovation] to make supplication in front of the Prophet”’ (Zafar, 74, retired spinner). Indeed, familiar sectarian debates occasionally broke out, something that a majority found unacceptable in the Holy Places:

When we were leaving ‘Arafat riding on top of a bus, there were these two guys who came from Britain arguing about the Barelwi-Deobandi debate.³³ I was getting really cheesed off but remained quiet as they were quite old. I thought to myself, “What a place to bring theses silly debates!”. In the distance was a bus full of African Muslims who were reciting a beautiful *qasida* [panegyric poem praising the Prophet]. Everyone just stood motionless, but those two lunatics continued debating. (Habib, 45, spinner)

Despite such disapproval, one young British-Pakistani admitted that he had found it difficult to be quite so pragmatic given the backing that the Saudi Arabian State gives to the puritanical and anti-Sufi ‘Wahhabi’ sect of Islam. As a ‘lover’ of the Prophet, he decided that he must take drastic steps:

Because I knew the differences between ‘us’ and ‘them’, their *‘aqida* [creed] and our *‘aqida*, one of my problems was reading *namaz* behind them [Wahhabi *imams*]. The first day I read behind them but I felt very uneasy. Some were telling me, “If you don’t know the *imam*, it’s ok” but I brushed it aside because we think they are *gustakh-i rasul* [blasphemers of the Prophet]. Then I decided, “No, I’m not going to do it”. We’d go to the mosque and join in with them but not do *niyya* [‘intention’, which validates the prayer]. We just used to do the poses, then afterwards we’d read our own *namaz*. Throughout the trip I used to think, “These are the people who back home would say, ‘Oh, we don’t read *namaz* behind them, they’re Wahhabi’. But here they say, ‘We should put these things aside’...All the elder people were saying,

"You are foolish. Are you reading for Allah or what?". (Ali, 30, housing support worker)

'Ali also complained that the Saudis 'try to push their beliefs onto others' through the publication of books and pamphlets given to all pilgrims, observing that: 'there are some simple brothers and sisters who aren't very educated and they get these leaflets and they think, "Oh, this must wrong"'.

Boosted by its oil wealth, Saudi Arabia has pumped huge budgets into the global, multi-media, export and propagation of Wahhabi ideas through pan-Islamising international missionary projects and organisations such as the Muslim World League (Rabitat al-'Alam al-Islami, founded 1962) (Nasr, 1994; Zaman, 2002).³⁴ Other pilgrims also felt that their belief and practice of Islam was policed and disciplined whilst in Saudi Arabia in a way that was not true of Britain or Pakistan. They reported the 'paranoid' prohibition on carrying anything while paying respects to the Prophet and the 'bad looks' from security guards ensuring that no-one touch the grills of His tomb.³⁵ There were stories, too, of guards challenging (sometimes in a threatening manner) public behaviour which was judged to constitute *shirk* (polytheism) or *bid'a*, from the kissing of a living saint's hand to carrying prayer beads for *zikr*. Pilgrims also spoke of papers vetted at the airport, one having a page removed from a book of devotions (Habib, 45, spinner). In the same way that some pilgrims were critical of Saudi Arabian organisation of the pilgrimage - 'and how organised people are back in Britain...if this was run by the British authorities how smoothly things would run' (Shazia, 56, housewife) - so too another compared the Saudis unfavourably to Britain in terms of freedom of speech:³⁶

I don't think there's any freedom allowed in the Saudi Kingdom to actually do any *da'wa* [propagation] or youth work or even any sort of freedom to talk against them. I think it was a year before I went to Hajj when the Iranians did a demonstration and were shot down [1987]...about three hundred people got massacred.³⁷ In the West it doesn't matter how bad the demonstration is they never open fire on

their own people. I think this is a problem, not maybe just with the Saudis. The majority of Muslim countries are 'trigger happy'. (Sajid, 37, computer programmer)

Pilgrims complained too that, in their drive to erase *bid'a*—and despite many 'innovations' of their own - the Saudi authorities have left unmarked, unsigned or even destroyed many places of *ziyara*. While not part of the formal Hajj or *'umra* rituals, sites of pilgrimage such as al-Baqi Cemetery are still sought out by many pious Muslims from across the world as places that offer great continuity with their salvation history and certain *baraka* (blessing) in the present:

There are so many thousand *sahabis* in that graveyard, but you don't know where their graves are. There are no names, no tombs or anything like that. So one just keeps walking and doing *fatiha* [reading the opening chapter of the Qur'an] at various places although we saw some Turks and some Shi'as from Iran who had old maps and we asked them and they pointed out Hazrat Fatima Zahra [the grave of the Prophet's daughter] so we went and prayed there. ('Ali, 30, housing support worker)

The other feeling I had was the preservation of our history. I think that was very sad to actually see that most places like the Prophet's birthplace and his house and other things, have been demolished...In the West every single thing historical has been preserved and it is a source of inspiration, that's what you want to see when you go there and do *ziyara*. (Sajid, 37, computer programmer)

And yet there were always minor victories that subverted such attempts at the discipline and regulation of religious belief and practice. Shazia (56, housewife) reported the success of a friend who wanted to smuggle religious souvenirs back to Britain:

At each grave-yard and other *ziyara* you go to they have these massive posters or signs saying, "It's forbidden in Islam to touch the graves or to believe that there's any blessing or to take stones or dust". But people have a long tradition of taking things from graves of holy people and this friend of mine was collecting stones

from different graves and mosques. We had to hide them in such a way that they wouldn't be detected at the airport and luckily those stones were brought back to England and now they adorn the front room, where people come and do *ziyara*.

REMEMBERING THE SACRED: SOUVENIRS & MEMORIES, PERFECTED & PRAGMATIC RELIGIOSITIES

Every year, at the end of Hajj season, British-Pakistanis flock to Manchester airport to give returning family and friends their customary welcome home reception. Temporarily sacralising the Arrivals Hall into which they enter, the *hajjis* and *hajjas* are greeted with flowers and *hars* (garlands). One *hajja* described the 'beautiful sight' of the crowds waiting to wish the returning pilgrims 'Hajj *mubarak*' (blessings of Hajj): 'you felt as if you were back in Jeddah, it was that kind of atmosphere' (Shazia, 56, housewife). In the days and weeks following their return, *hajjis* also share their experiences in many ways through telephone calls and letters and more occasionally audio-recorded reflections and short diary entries. While Munira (69, widow) complained that pilgrimage has become so commonplace now that people are less prepared than they were in the past to travel to listen to *hajjis'* stories, most returnees still receive a steady stream of visitors wanting to offer their congratulations and exchange reflections on the journey for the most recent local gossip.

Many visitors are also eagerly expectant of gifts promised or requested, enabling the metonymic transfer of the blessings of pilgrimage (Werbner, 1998: 99). Farzana (20, student) was especially keen to return with tokens that would actively encourage religiosity: 'if they read with the *tasbeih* [we bought], that's even more blessings'. However, Shazia (56, housewife), a more seasoned traveller, told of her female friends giving her, 'a very big list of things they want...every little domestic thing...I don't know whether it's got blessing or if it's cheaper'. Apart from the pressure from peers to shop for clothes, toys and electrical goods - with stopovers in Dubai having become especially popular for those who travel with Emirates Airlines - she went into great detail about the

range of religious souvenirs commonly available. One of the most popular is water from the well of *zamzam*. Apart from that, dates are a commonplace gift with the very expensive *ajwah* variety from trees said to have been planted in the Prophet's time (or even by Muhammad himself) reserved 'for somebody very special', for example, 'a *pir sabh*'. Then there are the *tasbehs* which Shazia bought with varying numbers of beads depending on the level of the recipient's piety: thirty-three beads for 'people who are not very practising' and 500-1000 beads for those 'who make a lot of *zikh*'.

Another popular gift is a *masala* (prayer mat) which, amongst British-Pakistanis at least, may be rubbed against the *ka'ba* or the gate of the Prophet's Mosque so as to capture its *baraka* (blessing) and distinctive perfume. Shazia reported that an imitation of the fragrance used to perfume the *ka'ba* is highly sought after. Other gifts include *hijabs* (scarves) for women, small gold *ka'ba* necklaces for young girls and video and audio recordings of Qur'anic recitations and *tarawih* (special Ramadan prayers) from Makkah and Madinah, as well as books on Islamic history and toy cameras containing pictures of all the main sites. As Sajid (37, computer programmer) reflected on this deterritorialised production of Islamised cultural commodities: 'although it's made in Japan or India, you still buy from there and it has a special meaning that it belongs to the Prophet's city or Makkah'. Even the most unlikely gifts can recall one's sacred journey: 'A friend of mine went and bought a pair of Dame Edna glasses from Madinah and every time I see her it brings back pleasant memories' (Shazia, 56, housewife).

Several British-Pakistani respondents reported the genuine pleasure they took in recalling their memories of pilgrimage to Makkah and Madinah. Meeting a recently returned pilgrim, praying on a *masala* rubbed with the perfume of the *ka'ba*, performing *zikh* (remembrance of God) or *i'tikaf* (seclusion, usually in a mosque, during the last 10 days of Ramadan) or even just hearing the *azan* (call to prayer), could trigger a momentary

expansion of the religious imagination and consciousness: 'It takes you back and you no longer look at the walls in the house but your mind has the picture of the *ka'ba* - that atmosphere or that aroma reproduces the effect of being back in Makkah' (Shazia, 56, housewife).

For some British-Pakistanis the memory of performing pilgrimage is seen as a powerful source of ongoing spiritual connection, strength and motivation. Hamid (20, student) reflected, 'If I now need help in any matter, I just close my eyes and visualise myself sitting in front of the Prophet's grave and ask for help...the thing is done'. Another young *hajji* truly hoped and believed that it had effected a permanent renewal and transformation in his life:

The biggest souvenir is the love in your heart and that's all Allah's doing, believing that Allah has heard your prayers and you are purified like a new baby...hoping and praying that when you go back into the world, that you'll try to keep yourself clean...These are the spiritual things in you and the rewards you've received from your Lord...It makes you think about yourself all the time (Ali, 30, housing support worker).

A small number of returning pilgrims, however, struggle to reintegrate, finding it difficult to separate themselves from what one pilgrim described as 'the purest, holiest place on earth' (Abid, 30, sales assistant). Whether because of his lack of preparation for the experience that overtook him or the rapidity of his movement from the profane to the sacred and back again, an existential disorientation overcame him that he found difficult to compare to the impact of any other form of travel:

I thought I'd just go back to the normal swing of things but I became withdrawn because I couldn't understand the experiences I'd had. I still felt as though a part of me was in Makkah. I just felt empty. I thought I'd find all the answers but I realised that I only had the questions. I had changed. It was a case of me getting to know myself. I felt as though my soul had been somewhere so happy it was just reacting, "Hold on, what are you bringing me back here for?"...I've been abroad

where the sea is blue and the sky is blue and everything is beautiful, where people call it “paradise”, but its never confused me and felt so different. (Abid, 30, sales assistant)

For others, perhaps the majority, however, there is a more gradually fading efficacy of pilgrimage once they reintegrate with British society. Many embark on a sacred journey with mixed motives—perhaps because of a parent, partner or friend - and their own spiritual journeys evolve in fits and starts. Memories of the Holy Places are still seductive but they rarely entirely displace attachments to friendships, careers and having fun which have become sacred in their own way. Many will acknowledge a sense of transgressing religious expectations and norms set out in the dominant discursive tradition but there is an affirmation too of the givenness of one's character and feeling most at home in Britain, as well as a pragmatic confidence in Allah's continuing mercy and forgiveness:

Coming back you're starting again as a new Muslim...but I only lasted with the headscarf for three months. Being there I was fine about it - everybody else covering - but for me not to wear a headscarf is normal. I looked at myself and thought, “This is not me”. I thought, “How strange I look”. I was getting back to my normal self. I noticed everybody was staring at me, like, “What's happened to her?”. Then slowly *namaz* started reducing as well...When I was really tired there was nothing there to inspire me. I would just have the excuse of the children, you know, “God will forgive me, Allah knows I'm really tired today, I can't get up for *fajr* [early morning prayer]”. (Maryam, 26, teaching assistant)

Regardless of their past lives, *hajjis* were traditionally given increased respect in the community and were often seen as returning more learned and enlightened as well as with new honorific titles and Arab-style attire (Gardner, 1995). For the very oldest British-Pakistanis, there is a clear sense now that the meaning and significance of pilgrimage has been diluted because so few who come back from pilgrimage are able to ‘cut themselves off’ from *dunya*: ‘they don't even grow a beard. The women go with make-up

and come back with make-up' (Munira, 69, widow). The sacred journey appears to have lost its uniqueness, become banal even, with some making the journey several times over: 'You meet people nowadays and they have done six or seven Hajjs, so now it has become a number game' (Zafar, 74, retired spinner). Nevertheless, there is still a sense of public scrutiny in British-Pakistani communities:

I spoke to a cousin of mine who is *hafiz* [one who has committed the whole of the Qur'an to memory] and *imam* of a mosque...After the formal greetings he started interrogating me on my daily actions saying that '*umra* would be of no use if I do not follow the daily obligations. (Suleyman, 16, student)

It's so easy to do Hajj. All you're doing that one month is '*ibadat* [worship]. The hardest thing is to live up to being a *hajji sabh*. One wrong move and I'll be the talk of the town. (Ali, 30, housing support worker)

Shauqat (36, small business advisor) recognised that 'if you have that concept [cutting off from *dunya*] you are safeguarded and spiritually you'll progress'. However, for him, there was always another chance: 'Allah, for some reason, does call them [pilgrims] for Hajj again'. Indeed, standing before the *ka'ba*, like most pilgrims, he asked God for worldly success as well as spiritual purification: 'O Allah, give us *dunya*, give us *mawla* [give us the best of both worlds]'. Rather than a once and for all sacred journey to prepare for death and the Day of Judgement, he imagined modern pilgrims periodically seeking 'top-ups' of forgiveness, 'until hopefully the time will come when they will be cut off completely'.³⁸ Despite what their elders might think, the Holy Places do exercise a strong hold over the religious imaginations of younger British-Pakistanis, positing the idealised sacrality of a trans-national or even post-national (Appadurai, 1996) spiritual homeland and the imagined communities of both Britain and Pakistan to which they are also ambiguously attached. Indeed, many articulated a strong

desire, sometimes a deeply felt need, to return to the Holy Places one day:

It's not a good place to live here being a Muslim. You need to refresh yourself and be in the company of good people...I need to be kept strong in some way but we can't live in Saudi Arabia, we can't live in Makkah or Madinah. Our life is here in England but we need to be reminded of Islam. (Maryam, 26, teaching assistant)

CONCLUDING ANALYSIS:

The many perspectives, accounts, and interpretations of the Hajj should be set one upon another like palimpsest...so that it may be seen in its historical and phenomenological variety, one interpretation critiquing another, reminding us of the philosophical, theatrical, and historical variety and depth of Islam. (Fischer and Abedi, 1990: 171)

Following Eickelman and Piscatori (1990), this article gives an insight into the way that British-Pakistani Muslim religious imaginaries are shifting in relation to historical, social, economic, political and cultural change. In the peasant communities of pre-partition Kashmir, despite no real expectation of pilgrimage to the Holy Places, 'Makkah-Madinah' had a pivotal place in the religious imagination. This was produced and reproduced through a formal, and especially informal, discursive tradition (Asad, 1986: 14) of preaching, pious anecdotes and religiously inspired Sufi poetry. There was room, too, in this tradition for significant diversity and nuance, for example, in terms of the esoteric understanding that ultimately the sacred concerns interior journeying. For poets of popular Punjabi mystical literature such as Baba Bulleh Shah and Mian Muhammad Bakhsh, the inner pilgrimage towards Allah was more important than any physical journey or legal obligation. However, in the context of post-war immigration, an older generation of Pakistanis in Britain is increasingly confronted with a perception of losing the sacred as they once knew it. Like religious institutions and rituals per se (Vertovec, 2000), the experience of pilgrimage has been transformed

especially intensely in diaspora although such transformations must be seen as part of more general processes associated with a globalising (post)modernity (Turner, 1994).³⁹

Because of increasing mobility and prosperity, pilgrimage has become more affordable, convenient and democratised for Pakistanis in Britain. However, these changing circumstances have produced new religious questions and debates to resolve. The custom of waiting until later in life to complete Hajj still has some hold, not least in terms of the constraints of discharging 'family responsibilities'. However, visits to the Holy Places are increasingly consumed with relative immediacy at times of pilgrims' need, desire and choosing. This is especially true amongst younger age groups and mirrors the way that spaces have opened up amongst second and third generation British-Pakistanis for the weaving and elaboration of more highly individualised and reflexive self-identities. This youth demographic, which has mushroomed since the 1980s, must in turn be set against the wider contexts of socialisation in a more or less secularising and ad hoc multicultural British education system. The Information Age, too, has seen the emergence of a globalised Islamic consumer culture and media hand-in-hand with world wide Islamic revivalism (Eickelman and Anderson, 2003). Against these shifting cultural capitals and social structures, religious authority, tradition and identity are being trans-locally renegotiated. This is as true for those held by a more pragmatic religiosity of belonging as much as those holding a more self-conscious sense of belief and practice.

All pilgrims experienced something of the liminality of ritual separation from *dunya* in the Holy Places, affirming intensified consciousness of Allah and being a Muslim. British-Pakistanis describe pilgrimage not only as an emotional and testing journey from sinfulness to purification but also - in commemoration of the lives of the Prophets Adam, Ibrahim and Muhammad - as a return to the sacred homeland of (monotheistic) all humanity. However, the 'authenticity' of actually 'being there' is increasingly framed in terms of the simulations of tradition readily available via a globalised Islamic consumer culture. Indeed, compared to idealised

accounts and even popular films, the perceived 'in-authenticity' of Saudi modernisation, the lack of *adab* amongst touristic pilgrims and the prevalence of 'McWorld' (Barber, 1995; Featherstone, 2002) is disappointing for some. Moreover, the fact of a Western-influenced *dunya* throughout the Holy Places highlights the fragility of the boundary between the sacred and the profane (Eade and Salnow, 1991) in an age of time-space compression. Rather than navigating boundaries once and for all, however, pilgrims continually make and remake their liminality step by step, from moment to moment.

Pilgrims' narratives about similarity and difference also attest to the fragility of such boundaries in terms of sacred-secular constructions of community, where cheek-by-jowl, cosmopolitanism and racism, theological utopias and dystopias, are juxtaposed. British-Pakistanis articulate a 'double' (Gilroy 1993) or, more properly, 'triadic' (Sheffer, 1986; Safran, 1991) consciousness, reflecting multiple, genuinely rooted and highly contextualised locations and attachments in terms of i) the homeland of Pakistan, ii) the wider Muslim world and iii) the new diasporic homeland of Britain. Strong feelings of *communitas* and empathy are cross-cut by the resentful and even fearful rhetorical tropes of encounter with Muslim 'Others': 'the commitment of poorer Pakistani pilgrims'; the potential 'danger of African pilgrims stampeding or stealing'; 'the separatism of Iranian Shi'ites'; 'the disorganised, authoritarian, rip-off and sometimes racist Saudis'. Moreover, British-Pakistani pilgrims also characterise their own compatriots in terms of narratives of 'privilege and softness, a lack of knowledge and *adab*'.

As well as differences of class and ethnicity, the Hajj brings together Muslims of competing religious traditions. There are zealots in all camps, all anxious to define orthodoxy and assert correct ritual practice (Asad, 1986). However, while Makkah and Madinah have long been key centres for the dissemination of revivalist ideas (Eickelman and Piscatori, 1990), the majority of interviewees viewed sectarian interventions as transgressing the *adab* of the Holy Places. For Sufi and Barelwi influenced British-

Pakistanis especially, the oil-rich nation-state of Saudi Arabia was the biggest culprit in this respect. Heavy investment in both propagating Wahhabi interpretations of Islam and regulating those of others was contrasted with the neglect and destruction of historical sites of devotion. Indeed, some pilgrims valued their visitation to the Prophet's tomb and its environs at Madinah at least as much as the official rites centred in Makkah and around.

Pilgrims return to Britain with a sense of the sacred that is shared, disseminated and infects family and friends during informal gatherings and communications. In the act of giving, mass-produced souvenirs become carriers of the sacred (Werbner, 1998). Back home, memories of Makkah and Madinah are triggered by a range of stimuli and senses, from hearing the call to prayer to the act of praying on a *masala* perfumed with the smell of the *ka'ba*. All are resources for the (re)expansion of the religious imagination. In weaving the intricate webs of meaning that go back and forth between normative discourses and demotic experiences, British-Pakistanis, like Muslims everywhere, are therefore active makers and re-makers of a tradition that is embodied and material as well as discursive in Asad's (1986) terms. This is what Nye (1999) calls 'religioning'.

The efficacy of travelling to the Holy Places for British-Pakistani religious identities must be mapped along a continuum from a readily accessible source of strength to a sense of fading ambiguity. Despite some of the elderly grumbling about the banal over-availability and under-appreciation of sacred time and place in the global (post)modern, for many younger people in the diaspora the possibility of travel to the Holy Places has become an important reference point for the imagination of their increasingly translated identities. However, despite the whirl of social change (Coleman and Eade, 2004), most pilgrims are pragmatic and few adhere to the ideal and 'cut off from *dunya*' on their return. Despite the tendency towards coherence associated with the nation state, global media and transnational religious movements, for the present moment at least, British-Pakistanis' highly contextualised narratives

resist simple incorporation by narrow and reactive, homogenised and formulaic, forms of culture and knowledge.

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NOTES

1. www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029390590&a=KCountryAdvice&aid=1013618387135 (accessed 29 March 2007).
2. It is not incumbent on children, the disabled, the enslaved, those with a mental illness or those women who do not have a *mahram* (a relative to whom marriage is forbidden). Exceptions are also made when conditions are dangerous for political or other reasons (von Grunebaum, 1951: 15-16).
3. Followers reject the term 'Barelwi' in favour of Ahl-i Sunna (People of the Sunna), underlining their claim to be authentic representatives of traditional Sunni Islam. Ahmad Riza Khan (d. 1921) of Bareilly (hence Barelwi), founder of the movement, was first and foremost a Hanafi scholar and his

scholarship was deployed to defend many of these more customary aspects of religious practice that were being criticised as un-Islamic innovations by reformist movements of the period. See Sanyal (1996).

4. As Fischer and Abedi (1990: 170) report, numbers participating have mushroomed in the modern period: 1850 (40,000); 1902 (200,000); 1964 (1,000,000); 1984 (2,500,000).
5. Indian Muslims often believed that seven pilgrimages to Ajmer were the equivalent of Hajj (Saiyed, 1989: 241) while the numbers of Pakistanis performing Hajj have been low relative to population size (Park, 1994: 271).
6. Geographically distant, it was simply imagined to be one place.
7. The tale concerned a pious young shepherd boy from Mirpur who sought to join up with a group of pilgrims leaving the area for Hajj. Thinking the journey too harsh, the latter left him asleep during the night but the young boy wandered and wandered until he came across a mosque in the middle of a desert. There, the most beautiful man he had ever seen was praying together with his companions. Upon spotting the boy and seeing to his needs, the man bid one of the boy's countrymen, 'Data Ganj Bakhsh' (al-Hujwiri, d.1075) of Lahore, to guide him home which the saint did in the blink of an eye. The beautiful man of course was the Prophet Muhammad.
8. On Sufi religious poetry in North India, see Schimmel (1980), Shackle (2000) and Ballard (2006).
9. For a brief account of the life and key work of Mian Muhammad, see McLoughlin and Khan (2006).
10. One of the earliest journeys recalled was Suleyman's (16, student) account of his father travelling from Britain by road over a period of two months during the late 1970s. Journeying through France, Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Turkey, Syria and Iraq, he and his companions finally reached their destination in Saudi Arabia but only after various testing experiences and adventurous encounters on the way. Honoured as a guest by the poor in Turkey and witnessing wondrous whirling by dervishes in Damascus, they read *namaz* with the Shi'ites in Najaf. See also the account of Thompson (1994), a British convert to Islam.
11. This also extends to sponsoring someone to complete Hajj on behalf of someone who has died and was unable to complete the pilgrimage themselves. This is known as Hajj *badl* (Mukhtar, 42, community leader).
12. A good proportion of single young men make the journey principally as escorts for older relatives.
13. Dreams are a hugely important vehicle for coming to know what Allah has decreed. See Sirriyeh (2000).
14. For an account of shrine culture in Mirpur see McLoughlin and Khan (2006) and Ballard (2006).
15. For an international comparison of the management of Hajj in the Muslim world, see Bianchi (2004).

16. Requirements include passports, visas, return tickets, banker's drafts for local services and certificates for meningitis inoculations, marriage and so on (Mukhtar, 42, community leader).
17. Although, interestingly, in recent years the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office has established a British Hajj Delegation close to Haram Sharif (Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2006).
18. In recent times there has been a clamp down on poor quality accommodation with it being a condition of travel now that approved (minimum 2 or 3 star) rooms be taken as part of a package (Mukhtar, 42, community leader).
19. Malaysians have a replica of the key sites which intending pilgrims train on (Mukhtar, 42, community leader).
20. The name often given by Barelwi-influenced detractors to followers of the Arabian reformer, Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab (d.1792), or indeed anyone exhibiting anti-Sufi or even reformed-Sufi tendencies. Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab's mission was to purge Arabia of the various 'innovations' (*bid'a*) which he maintained had compromised God's absolute oneness, uniqueness and sovereignty. For Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab, only that given sanction in the Qur'an, *hadith* or by the first generation of Islam, the pious ancestors (*al-salaf al-salih*), could be considered authentically 'Islamic'. See Sirriyeh (1999).
21. Before changing into *ihram* body hair is removed, beards and nails trimmed, and full ablution made. Two white sheets must be worn by men while women simply dress modestly (Roff, 1986: 84). Sex and the taking of any life are forbidden. Mukhtar (42, community leader) reports that, before departing, British-Pakistanis do gather with relatives as is reported by Roff to be customary. The latter might bring a gift and old clothes to be distributed amongst the poor. However, these are brief affairs. To make a will before departing is rarer.
22. These mark a 30 km radius around Makkah beyond which no non-Muslim should pass (Park, 1994: 265).
23. Until his death at the turn of the last century Zindapir was a well-known Pakistani living saint in North-West Frontier Province. Werbner (2003) is a sophisticated study of the cult that grew up around him.
24. Pilgrims can literally follow in the 'footstep' (*maqam*) of Ibrahim as a miraculous stone within Haram Sharif is said to contain its imprint (Fischer and Abedi, 1990: 160). Ibrahim's steadfastness is replayed in the life of Muhammad who rides the House of God of the idols on his triumphant return to Makkah from Madinah.
25. Pilgrims perform the rite at least three times; upon arrival in Makkah, at the end of the pilgrimage rituals and once more before departing (Wolfe, 1997: xxii). The *ka'ba* is often described as an earthly counterpart of Allah's heavenly throne, while *tawaf* imitates angels' circling of Him in adoration (Bianchi, 1995: 89).
26. Muhammad originally followed Jewish tradition and prayed towards Jerusalem, until he received a revelation instructing him to make the Muslim *qibla* (direction of prayer) Makkah instead.

27. *The Message* (1975) is an epic filmic representation of Muslim salvation history starring Anthony Quinn. Drawing on the Qur'an, but especially the *sirah* (Muhammad's biography) and *hadith* literatures, it was given a seal of approval by the most important centre of traditional religious learning, al-Azhar, in Cairo.
28. These include modern roads and air-conditioned transportation, water-sprinklers, modern slaughterhouses, medical, fire-fighting and surveillance personnel, and a media centre (Fischer and Abedi, 1990: 169).
29. The Arndale is a large shopping mall in Manchester, UK.
30. I have subsequently been informed that Ann Summers adult shops are also to be found close by too.
31. For example, in 2006 a stampede killed 400 including three British nationals. See www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029390590&a=KCountryAdvice&aid=1013618387135 (accessed 29 March 2007).
32. Mukhtar (42, community leader) reports that some do go to the modern slaughter areas (or, alternatively, to local Bedouin), touch an animal and pay for it to be slaughtered and butchered. The Saudi authorities then ship most of the meat overseas to the needy.
33. The message of the Deobandis, another '*ulama*' led movement of British India, was one of a disciplined adherence to the divinely ordained *shari'a* (Islamic law), cultivating a disciplined personal morality and restrained ritual practice. Optional rites and 'innovations' with disputed sanction in the *hadith* but defended by the Barelwis were actively discouraged. In British India controversies were played out very publicly during preaching tours, oral disputations and in an increasingly elaborate sectarian literature. See Metcalf (1982). This has all been reproduced in diaspora and the new media.
34. The League first emerged as part of Saudi Arabia's attempt to counteract communism and especially the pan-Arab nationalism and socialism of revolutionaries such as Nasser of Egypt.
35. Mukhtar (42, community leader) also spoke of applications being rejected by the Saudi authorities because family names including words with divine associations such as 'Ullah' or 'Wahid' were said to constitute *shirk*.
36. It would be interesting to re-interview respondents in the wake of '9/11' and '7/7' to explore any impact on their constructions of Britain as much as Islam.
37. For a discussion of changing Iranian Shi'ite interpretations of Hajj, see Fischer and Abedi (1990).
38. Compare Abu Yazid of Bistam, "On my first pilgrimage I saw only the temple; the second time, I saw both the temple and the Lord of the temple; and the third time I saw the Lord alone" (Roff 1986: 86).
39. McLoughlin and Khan (2006) argue for the late impact of modernity on Pakistani administered Kashmir.

PART FOUR

Shifting Identities

